

Independents in Parliament

The VOB Independent

The Voices of Bradfield Independent will represent our electorate with the backing of Voices of Bradfield Inc. Our inspiration has been the success of Cathy McGowan, Helen Haines and Zali Steggall but there have been Independents in the Federal House of Representatives since Federation. Since 1901, thirty-nine Independent individuals have been elected, some for multiple terms.¹

Benefits

“Minor parties and independents are indispensable for infusing new issues into the political arena and, at least sometimes, for keeping the big parties on their toes.”²

Our Voices of Bradfield Independent will not be constrained by a political party. They do not have to vote the Party line that is decided by a distant Party Head Office. They will vote according to their conscience and the values of their electorate.

“Every vote is a conscience vote.”
Cathy McGowan.

They will not be a career party politician. They will have a breadth of experience to draw upon when representing the electorate.

The Independent candidates who have been selected so far by community groups in other

electorates, are exceptionally capable people. They are highly qualified, and have major life achievements before standing for parliament.

Community minded Independents tend to be moderates who support evidence-based policies, and have not come from the extremes of the political spectrum.

Role of Independents

In Australia, membership of political parties has been declining for more than a decade. Independents are playing an increasing role in Federal parliament.

In parliament, Independents can...

- Speak up for their electorates, and vote on issues according to the broad views of their electorate instead of following a Party line.
- Introduce legislation.
- Advocate for enquiries. For example, Andrew Wilkie was instrumental in calling for the Royal Commission into Melbourne’s Crown Casino.
- Sit on committees that examine issues/legislation and report to parliament
- Represent the views of their electorate in the media through interviews, panels and press releases. Unlike some Party members, their speech to the media will be consistent with how they vote in Parliament.
- Advocate widely for the issues that are important to their electorate.

¹ Cullen, A., *The Independent Effect*, 2020, Parliamentary Publishing, p.173f

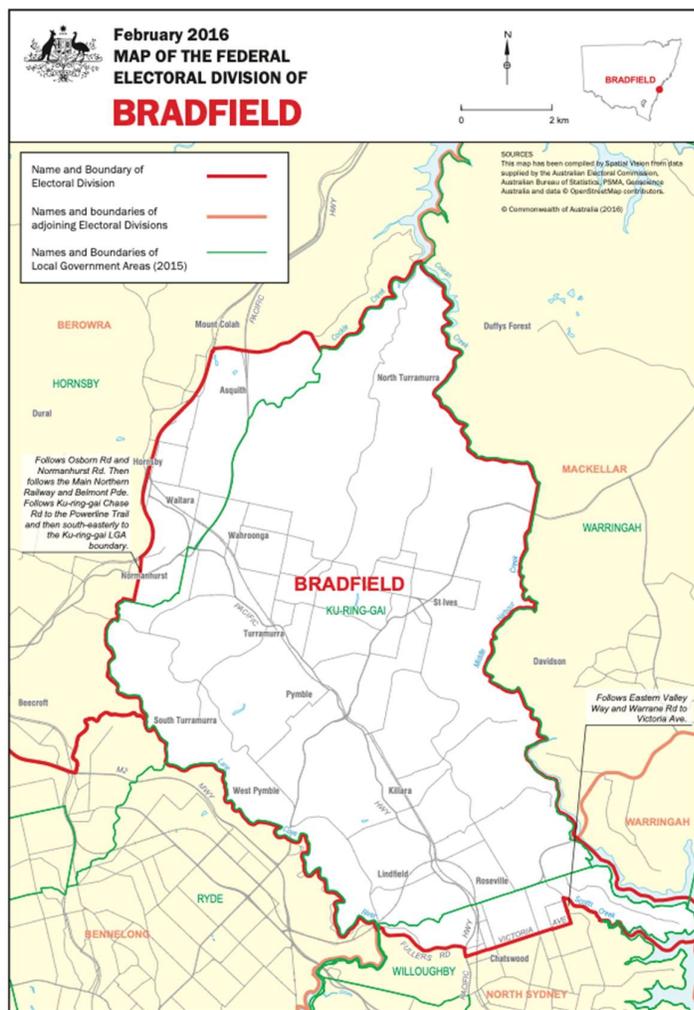
² Maddox, G., “Political Stability, Independents and the Two Party System”, *Current Affairs Bulletin*, 1992, 69(1), p.24

Fact Sheet 104 – Independents in Parliament

Bradfield Electorate – Facts and Figures

The Bradfield electorate occupies sandstone country whose traditional owners are the Darramurragal and Guringai clans.

It was established in 1949 and has always been won by the Liberal Party.



Overview of Bradfield

(Census 2016)

Median Age – 41

Sex - 52% female, 48% male

Education - 47% Bachelor degree or above

Language at home not English – 28%.

Country of Birth - 57% Australia, 39% Overseas – 7% China, 7% UK, S Africa 3%.

Religion - 33% no religion, 25% Catholic, 20% Mainline Protestant.

Families - 47% couple with children, 14% older couples without children.

Dwellings – 27% medium/high density, 63% free-standing.

Employment - 60% full time (60% professionals/managers), 34% part time, 5% unemployed. 28% did Volunteer work.

Household Income (weekly) – 40% had weekly income \$2,500+, 9% under \$650.

Transport - 50% drive to work, 26% Train.

Citizens – 83%.

Educated and Wealthy

Bradfield is one of the most highly educated electorates in the country, and one of the wealthiest.

Voices of Bradfield supports community wishes to see Competent and effective government, an Anti-Corruption Commission, effective Covid management, and Compassionate polices that support a fairer, more equal society.